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ABSTRACT

In 1979 a stratified random sampling of 541 families in 4 rural Virginia counties were interviewed about major occupations, secondary occupations, travel to work, and whether the division of labor within the county allowed for a complete exchange system. Data, compared to 1940 census statistics, indicated that a significant change in occupational structure had taken place. The number of farmers declined and the proportion of clerical and sales workers increased. Over 40% of the income-producing workers in the 4 rural counties had second jobs. Although farm labor constituted an insignificant proportion of part-time jobs, all other occupational categories had a significant number of part-time workers. Many rural workers (37%) treated the rural community as a suburb and traveled great distances to work, averaging over 15 miles one way. In 1979, women represented 43% of the income-producing workers (as opposed to 13% in 1940) and made up a larger proportion of workers in each category except the professional area. Increased employment of women had significant effects on human resources needed for rural development. Human resources in general were not sufficient for either an agricultural or an industrial economy. Nevertheless, those studied indicated allegiance to "the rural way of life." (CM)

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The Implications of Urban Occupational Patterns on Traditional Rural Life: Implications for Cultural Contradictions*

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ABSTRACT

Title: The Implications of Urban Occupational Patterns on Traditional Rural Life.

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Examining the changes in rural occupational structure, it is found that: (1) There is a significant change in occupational structure; (2) Many rural workers have second jobs; (3) Many rural workers treat the rural community as a suburb and travel great distances to work; (4) That there has been significant changes in the employment of women. The implications for these findings in terms of rural development are examined. For instance, the increased employment of women has significant effects on the human resources needed for rural development. It is also found that the human resources in general are not sufficient for either an agricultural or an industrial economy. The problems faced by the rural community are posited to be more severe than anticipated by current research.

The Implications of Urban Occupational Patterns on Traditional Rural Life: Implications for Cultural Contradictions

The status of world development is such that at once there remain hunting and gathering societies, agricultural societies and industrial societies. The early industrial states have experienced the more normal development of moving from one type of social organization to another, and each type developing fully before it is replaced by a succeeding form of social organization. That is to say, that in the European and North American industrial societies, each form of social organization developed naturally from forces, both social and economic, generated by the preceeding form. Thus, the industrial United States developed from agricultural America only after the agricultural technology was fully developed.

Such natural progressions have become rare in an era of rapid communication and transportation. Much more likely in a world of international trade is the imposition of one type of social organization upon another. For instance, the importation of an urban technology on an agricultural society has become a usual form of cultural transmission. Many times such efforts are viewed by the culture imposed upon as an invasion. The United States and Russia, as the "superpowers" of the world are often viewed by other nations as imperalistic in their efforts to impose an industrial technology on an agricultural society.

In fact, there are factors imbedded in the industrial form of social organization that are contradictory to agricultural society. These factors, in fact, do not require that one move from one society to

another to observe their effect on the patterns of community life. In this study, we will show that the spread of an urban society within the United States has created similar cultural contradictions for the residents of the rural areas of the United States (Coughenour, 1977; Ellis, 1975, Hefferman and Lasley, 1978).

More specifically, we will deal with the impact of a rapidly changing occupational structure on the exchange system of local communities in rural areas of the state of Virginia in the Southeastern United States. The Southeastern states, unlike the Northern states remained primarily agricultural areas until World War II. In the time since that war, the development of an industrial form of social organization has been severe. The resulting changes in occupational structure, as well as the age and sex composition of rural communities present severe developmental problems for the local community. Basically, these problems fall into three general areas:

(1) The population base of the rural community is not large enough to provide a complete industrial exchange system. With an increase in occupational diversification, some goods and services that are a normal part of the industrial exchange system are difficult to provide in the rural areas. Thus, the shortage of workers in rural areas will lead to an increase in number of people with multiple occupations.

(2) Further, the rural area does not have the industrial base to provide work for all its members. The first "industrialization" occurs in agricultural technology. As the technology of agriculture is improved, the number of workers needed for farm work declines. In the rural areas of this study, this has resulted in the rapid decline of total population

as people move to urban areas and, equally important to an increase in the number of people who live in the rural area but work in other areas.

(3) Finally, the change in occupational structure has increased the number of women engaged in income producing work. Additionally, with the exodus of younger people to urban areas, the age composition of the rural area is altered, such that women become an essential part of the occupational structure of the community. Further, women become the basic "untapped resource" of rural development.

The purpose of this paper will be to explore these notions in four rural counties in Virginia, U.S.A. In the summer of 1979, a team of researchers conducted an extensive study of the occupational life of these counties. Basic to our study were the major occupations of the residents, the patterns of the secondary occupations of residents, the travel to work and manner in which the division of labor within the county allowed for a complete exchange system. In each case, the occupations of all members of a household were determined. Thus, our study was one of rural families.

Sampling Procedures

Respondents for this study were selected on the basis of a stratified random sampling design (Kish, 1965). Four counties were selected by the authors for inclusion in the study according to two major criteria: (1) a rural population, as defined by the absence of any municipality with a population of 2,500 or more and (2) regional representation, as defined by geographical location in or near one of several distinct sections of Virginia, including the "boot" section of southwestern Virginia, the centrally located "Piedmont" section, the Chesapeake area, and the northern Shenandoah Valley area.

The county extension agent in each county was then contacted concerning the nature of the study, the general characteristics and impressions of the people of the county, and the geographical distribution of homes and roads in the county. A visit by one of the project directors and one of six student interviewers was then arranged with each county agent. The purpose of this meeting was to meet the agent personally, to answer any questions about the project, and, generally, to garner support of the project from the agent and/or other county officials as determined by the agent. At this initial meeting, the agents were asked to have a prepared notice of the impending study published in the local newspaper one or two weeks in advance. Excellent cooperation with the researchers was received from the county agents and other county officials in all four counties.

During the initial visit with the county agents, county road maps were obtained and the county's residential dwellings were sectioned and numbered. The enumeration of residences involved a variety of procedures: (1) riding along country roads with the agent and recording his house count estimates as we went along; (2) riding along roads and house counting by actual sitings; (3) consulting county commissioned dwellings and business maps; and (4) consulting local post offices (where we were often just behind the census enumerators). The combined use of two or more of these techniques in each county yielded an approximation of housing units along each road of every county. These approximations were conveyed to the county agents and other officials and were further checked against available county population counts completed over the last few years. These enumeration validity checks confirmed the accuracy of the dwelling county and we proceeded with the sampling procedure.

The goal in each county was to interview the head of the household or his/her spouse in approximately 150 households in each county. Using six interviewers, this goal translated into approximately 25 interviews per interviewer per week. The county road maps were sectioned into six parts such that the number of estimated dwellings in each area was approximately equal. The interviewers were instructed to scout out the roads in their area before interviewing to become familiar with the distribution of the dwellings and to report any large discrepancies between their house counts and the estimates provided. They were further instructed to randomly select a house on a road and to systematically select subsequent houses from the remainder on the road. Because of the number of dwellings in each county, the proportion guiding the systematic selection process varied from county to county from 1/12, to 1/20, to 1/13, to 1/10. If a "respondent" was not home, the interviewer was instructed to make one return visit. If there was refusal or if no one was found at home after the second visit, the interviewer was instructed to alternately contact the next house down from or the first house previous to the rejected house and to proceed with the systematic selection from that point.

Findings:

Our findings will be presented in these major parts:

1) The change in the population of workers from 1940-1980

2) The redistribution of workers from 1940-1980

3) The participation of workers in secondary occupations in 1980

4) The number of workers who leave the local community daily

5) The changing participation of women in the occupational life of the community.

1. The population of workers

Our sample of 541 workers is a systematic sample of the four county area in 1979. Of the 541 respondents we find that between them and their spouses there were 759 income-producing jobs. If we take this base figure and generalize it to the four county area, there are 6019 people with an income-producing jobs in 1979. In 1940, according to the U.S. Census, there were 7930 income-producing occupations in the counties. These both exclude both retired people and housewives. Thus, the decline in the population (from 25,155 in 1940 to 20,081 in 1979), is reflected in the number of workers in income-producing occupations. The proportion of the population working in 1940 was 30%. The proportion working in 1979 is 30%.

Secondly, we can examine the distribution of workers by major occupation. Table 1 shows, the percentage of workers in income-producing jobs for 1940 and 1979 and the change in percent of workers during that period. During the peirod from 1940 through 1979, professional, clerical-sales, craft and service occupations increased by more than 5%. At the same time, farmer and farm labor occupations were held by 50% of the workers in our four counties. In 1979 only 12.3% of the workers were engaged in farming. The workers became more evently distributed among all occupations. In 1940 the Gibbs and Martin (1962) measure of occupational dispersion is .80. In 1979 it is .91, much closer to the 1.0 score demonstrating equal

distribution. Thus, from 1940 to 1979 the occupational structure changed from a monolithic agrarian to dispersed industrial.

The change scores give some notion as to the severity of the changes taking place. Farmers and farm managers declined by 22 percentage points. This literally means that the number of farmers declined by two-thirds. In one county, for instance, there were 1009 farmers in 1940. In 1970, there were only 226 farmers. Additionally, the rural exchange system has undergone significant change. The proportion of clerical and sales workers has increased by five times--in a period of declining population. The rural community becomes more urban-like in both its occupational structure and its exchange system.

Thirdly, in 1979, we found that a little over 40% of the income-producing workers in the four rural counties had second jobs. In our sample 156 respondents (29.7% of the total sample, 41% of the income producing workers) held second jobs. Table 2 shows the distribution of these workers' second occupations by the same categories used in Table 1. In the table the numbers represent the number of residents of the counties with second jobs generalized from the sample. The first important finding from an examination of the table is that farming has become a part-time job for many rural residents.

Note that 312 people in the counties studied continue to farm as a second job. In the course of our study we found a state patrolman, a newspaper columnist, a county agent, a druggist, and several retired people, among others, who listed farming as a part-time effort. While the small, labor intensive farm is no longer a viable first occupation, a number of people continue to maintain the family farm.

The second major observation is the use of craft industries as a second job. Crafts fall into two parts: first, there is the traditional crafts. Quilting, food preserving, wood carving, pottery and knife making are crafts where the product is intended for external trade, that is, it is intended to be sold outside the local community. The second form of craft, modern crafts, includes auto repair, television repair, air conditioners, cement finishers, etc. These crafts are primarily service oriented and are intended for the internal use of the community. The modern crafts are another indication of the changing nature of rural life. Because demand is not great enough to require full-time workers, many industrial crafts are performed on a part-time basis. Further, since the traditional crafts are essentially exports, they are not part of the local exchange system.

Finally, it should be noted farm labor constitutes an insignificant proportion of the part-time jobs of the community, but all other occupational categories have a significant number of part-time workers. Combined with the data on major occupations, it is clear that the part-time work reflects a clear change of the occupational structure of the rural community.

Our fourth observation concerns the number of workers whose job is outside the county. Bryant, et al. have reported that the workers in these rural counties average over 15 miles in a one way trip to work. Some of the workers travel in excess of 100 miles on a one way trip. If the worker travels to work daily, this would equal over 50,000 miles a year on the trip to work. Given these great distances, it is surprising that a number of the workers do not work in the local community.

In fact, 37% of the residents in these rural counties work outside of their county of residence. Fifty percent of the males and 22% of the females journey to a different county for work. Thus, a significant proportion of the community are residents only, creating, in effect, a rural suburb. Again, the shift to an urban industrial society is reflected by this outcome.

Finally, we point to the participation of women in the labor force. In 1940, women represented only 13% of the income producing workers, in 1979, they represent 43% of the income producing workers. Thus, the distribution of income producing work by sex in rural areas is similar to that of urban areas. Table 3 shows the proportion of women workers by occupational category in 1940 and in 1970. The most significant result to be gleaned from this table is that women make up a larger proportion of workers in each category except for the professional area. (Women were school teachers - about the only professional occupation in rural counties in 1940.)

What is interesting about this table is that it conforms to the national patterns of the distribution of women in the occupational system. Prior to 1940, women represented a major "untapped resource" in rural areas. That is significantly less true today.

In summary, we find that in 39 years, four rural counties in Virginia (USA) have become less rural and more urban in nature. The occupational structure, the suburban nature of residents as work place, the use of women in the labor force all have changed significantly. What has changed less is the values concerning rural life.

The Desire to Preserve Rural Life

If there is a single predominant feature to the conversations with the people of the four counties studied, it would be their allegiance to the "rural way of life." Dudley (forthcoming) found that, when asked what people liked best about a rural county, it was the agrarian life style. Many of the newer residents of these counties move there to return to more traditional values and a different (non-urban) way of life.

We would argue that such is not the case. In the four counties in Virginia which were picked because of their rurality (Bryant, et al., 1979), a very non-rural occupational structure was found. The "rurality" discussed by the residents really has to do with other factors. True, there are more farmers here than in the city, but in fact, they are a small part of the rural division of labor and of local exchange systems. The most prevelant worker is the suburban commuter, who travels some distance to a urban center for a job in industrial society. American Gothic is replaced by a two car family with husband and wife both leaving for income-producing jobs each morning.

The question is, how long can the values, attitudes, and beliefs about rural life stay as they are when the structural conditions have changed so completely. At the moment, one can only speculate. One speculation is that rural sociologists foster the continuation of these values in the way in which they ask questions. As Bryant, et al. (1979) have noted, the only thing that remains relatively the same is the scenery. The people are "hustling" to "stay alive" and "get ahead."

The other possibility, of course, is that the structure of rural life is changing so rapidly (in less than two generations) that the values

remain even though the structure has changed. If this is the case, rural areas are an excellent place to begin to observe anomie. The shift from a mechinical to an organic solidarity has occured in the industralized country. When this is recognized by the residents, "rural life" as distinct from urban life, will disappear.

Table 1

Income Producing Jobs, Percent and Percent Change in Each Occupation Category, 1940 and 1979. (Some catagories combined to account for change in Census.)

Catagories	1940	1979	Change
Professional	3.8	10.8	+ 7.0
Manager	5.0	8.6	+ 3.6
Clerical-Sales	3.6	15.2	+11.6
Craft	6.4	16.8	+10.4
Operative-Transport	5.7	11.7	+ 6.0
Labor, Except Farm	10.4	8.4	- 2.0
Farmer, Manager	32.5	10.4	-22.1
Farm Labor	16.7	1.9	-14.8
Service	2.1	7.6	+ 5.5
Private Household	5.5	1.6	- 3.9
Other	8.3	7.0	- 1.3
	100%	100%	0.0

Table 2: Occupational Distribution of Second Jobs. n and % N = 1872 (156)*.

P	n	%
Professional	156 (13)	8.0
Manager	60 (5)	3.0
Clerical-Sales	168 (14)	9.0
Craft	468 (39)	25.0
Operative Transport	288 (24)	15.0
Labor	144 (12)	8.0
Farmer, Manager	312 (26)	17.0
Farm Laborer	24 (2)	0.4
Service	156 (13)	8.0
Private Household	96 (8)	5.0
Other	24 (2)	
Totals	1872 (156)	(99.8%)*

* ( ) = sample N
** due to rounding, % ≠ 100

Table 3. The proportion of the income producing work force that is female, 1940 and 1970, by occupational category.*

	1940	1970
Professional	.92	.43
Manager	.12	.42
Clerical Sales	.30	.35
Crafts	.05	.02
Operatives-Transport	.09	.31
Labor	.01	.03
Farmer, Farm Manager	.04	.07
Farm Labor	.00	.42
Service	.42	.70
Private	.91	.93

* Housewives and retired people excluded.

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